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The **AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

Skibird



Magazine of the 109th Airlift Wing, Stratton Air National Guard Base, Scotia, N.Y.

Spring 2010



LaBarge selected as next wing commander

Give back to those who give so much

By Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Trottier
109th OGI - Superintendent

Today seemed like any other day, so I thought. As a technician in the New York Air National Guard, I wear the U.S. Air Force uniform daily and often change into civilian clothes for the ride home. But today I wore my AF uniform home due to a dentist appointment and then made a quick stop to the Dollar General Store in Corinth.

While standing in line, a young lady tapped me on the shoulder with a huge grin on her face and asked me if her son could go ahead of me. I thought nothing of it and said "no problem." I couldn't help but watch her young boy who was about 8 years old pay for his "God Bless the American Soldier" magnet by pulling a crumpled \$5 bill out of his pocket. What I wasn't ready for was what he did with the magnet.

The young boy named Colby looked at me and handed me the magnet, smiled, shook my hand and said "Thank you!" I told Colby I would place the magnet on my refrigerator to remember him for his nice gift to me! Quite honestly, I was speechless and teary-eyed. Having been to both Iraq and Afghanistan, I often have adults express their gratitude for my service and ask my opinion on both wars. However, in this situation where 8 -year- old Colby thanked me with his gift

served as a lesson to me that people of all ages do care about our troops. I believe we all could heed young Colby's actions by thanking servicemembers we know for their honorable service. If you agree and want to do more, please donate your time and much needed money to the Adopt A Soldier program in Wilton to defray shipping costs. Mom, you did well! (This article was a "Letter to the Editor" published in the Glens Falls Post Star on March 21)



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Trottier holds up the magnet a little boy bought him to thank him for his service. The magnet reads: "God Bless the American Soldier."

109th Airlift Wing



Commander
Col. Anthony German
Vice Commander
Col. Timothy LaBarge

The Skibird

Spring 2010
Volume 48, No. 2

Editorial Staff

Lt. Col. Jody Ankabrandt
Chief of Public Affairs
Capt. Shane Gernand
Public Affairs Deputy
Master Sgt. Willie Gizara
Public Affairs Manager
Master Sgt. Christine Wood
Base Videographer/Photographer
Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Editor, The Skibird
Senior Airman Ben German
Base Photographer

The Skibird
1 ANG Road, Scotia, NY 12302-9752;
PHONE: (518) 344-2423/2396
DSN: 344-2423/2396, FAX:344-2331
EMAIL: 109AW.Public.Affairs@ang.af.mil

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On the cover:

Col. Timothy LaBarge, vice commander shows Congressman Paul Tonko, district 21, around the base April 6. Colonel LaBarge was recently selected as the next 109th Airlift Wing commander. He will take command of the wing during a ceremony on June 12. (Photo by Master Sgt. Christine Wood)

The Skibird

SPRING 2010
VOLUME 48, No. 2

Inside

Loadmaster serves as local firefighter	5
By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt	
Guardsman joins Haiti search & rescue	6
By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt	
Congressman visits base	8
Photos by Master Sgt. Christine Wood	
Col German prepares to leave	10
By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt	
Airmen use vanpooling service	14
By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt	
Airman invited to Help USA dinner	14
Courtesy Photo	

Plus:	
Chaplain's Corner	9
Volunteer Opportunities	9
Air Force News	15
Family Programs	17
In the Community	17
Alumni News	18
Promotions & Awards	19



City firefighter Lt. Anthony Helstowski, carries a young child from a burning home at 18 Grove Place in Schenectady Sunday, March 14. (Daily Gazette photo by Peter R. Barber)

(Right) Master Sgt. Anthony Helstowski is a loadmaster with the 109th Airlift Wing. On the civilian side, Sergeant Helstowski is a firefighter with the Schenectady Fire Department. (Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara)

Fire Rescue

109th loadmaster serves as local firefighter

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Public Affairs

On a Sunday during a Unit Training Assembly, you might find Master Sgt. Anthony Helstowski out on the flightline working on a 109th Skibird. But on Sunday, March 14, Sergeant Helstowski had a different uniform on as he carried a child out of a burning building.

The Schenectady Fire Department responded to a structure fire that day, and for Sergeant Helstowski it was the most intense call he's responded to yet.

"We pulled in and there was fire blowing out the side of the building," he said. "Reports said that children were still inside. Crews were already inside putting out the fire and doing searches. My partner and I took a hose line in, and saw the crews were doing a good job getting out the fire, so we went on with our search.

"We went in one of the bedrooms and found both kids. One was underneath a toddler bed and the other one was on top of the bed underneath the blanket. They were 4 and 5 years old."

Sergeant Helstowski and his partner got the kids out of the building and got them on an ambulance. Both kids are now fine.

"We've assisted people out of building before, but with the smoke and the heat and the kids hiding – and then actually finding them – it was very intense."


Sergeant Helstowski has been a Schenectady firefighter for nine years. Before that, he worked in the loadmaster section on base full time. He said he likes that both jobs are so different, and coming here actually gives him a break from the stresses that come along with being a firefighter.

"Going to the fire department

See *HELSTOWSKI*, Page 8

Spring 2010





Guardsmen joins search and rescue efforts in Haiti

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Public Affairs

Only days after a 7.0 Magnitude earthquake shook Haiti on Jan. 12, Tech. Sgt. Mike Lazzari was there to assist in search and rescue as part of an 80-person New York Task Force.

Along with being a firefighter at Stratton Air National Guard Base, Sergeant Lazzari is also a firefighter with the New York City Fire Department. As a member of FDNY, he was assigned to Task Force 1, which assembled the night of Jan. 13. The group, which consisted of 40 FDNY members and 40 members of the New York City Police Department, was in Haiti for 11 days.

"We landed in the Port-au-Prince airport," Sergeant Lazzari said. "Right away, we saw thousands of people. It was complete chaos. There were

people everywhere and planes landing constantly. At the time, the control tower was a desk on the grass with people on cell phones. When we got there, the military had started taking over operations, as far as what aircraft were coming in or going out.

"It was crazy – people were everywhere. Buildings were destroyed. People were eating, sleeping, cooking and even showering in the streets."

New York Task Force 1 went in with a specific mission – search and rescue for live victims only. Sergeant Lazzari said it was sometimes difficult to keep to that mission.

"As soon as we get there, everyone knew we were there to help. Communicating the best we could, a lot of the victims' families asked us to pull out

SEARCH AND RESCUE TASK FORCE

The Skibird



Tech. Sgt. Michael Lazzari is a member of the New York City Fire Department. As part of the FDNY, he was assigned to New York Task Force-1. The task force went to Haiti to provide search and rescue for trapped victims following the earthquake. Sergeant Lazzari is also a firefighter with the 109th Airlift Wing. (All photos courtesy of FDNY)

DOAs (Dead on Arrival), just to get them out, but we couldn't do that (since it wasn't our mission). It was morally a tough situation," he said.

For many of the Task Force members, they had seen horrible destruction before. But for Sergeant Lazzari, it was the first time he had witnessed destruction of this magnitude.

"A lot of the guys I was there with were 15- to 20-year vets,

and a lot of them went through 9/11. There, they were digging out friends; in Haiti, they were digging out strangers, but they said it was still comparable," Sergeant Lazzari said. "Me, personally, that was probably the worst thing I've seen or been a part of."

Each member of the task force had a specific role in the search and rescue mission. From rescue specialists and structural



Members of New York Task Force 1 rescue a child out of a destroyed building in Haiti. Tech. Sgt. Michael Lazzari was part of the task force that provided search and rescue following the earthquake.

specialists to logistics specialists and Hazmat tech specialists, which was Sergeant Lazzari's role.

"As a task force, we found six live victims," he said. "The whole team supported one another in accomplishing our mission."

While Sergeant Lazzari said helping save those lives was an awesome feeling, he also said there was more he wished he could have done to help.

"There was so much that country needed. I wanted to give out water to people, but if you gave out one bottle of water, then 100 other people come fighting for that water. You want to give clothing, you want to give blankets," Sergeant Lazzari said. "One of the hardest parts was knowing what we were there for and sticking to that mission. We'd stop to help a few people with scrape injuries and burns, but after helping them, 40 other people come out with injuries."

"You get there and you want to do as much as you can, but as soon as you get there you realize you can't. People are in desperate mode and willing to do anything. You leave there

still wanting to do more, but at the same time, you stuck to your mission and your training and did the best you could."

Sergeant Lazzari said being picked to be a part of the task force was an extremely humbling experience.

"I was by far the most junior guy there," he said. "I was working with New York City's best rescue technician specialists ... Some of these guys were true heroes. One of our task force leaders was Chief Joe Downy. His family is a legacy in the fire department. Just to work with him and the other guys – I felt very lucky to be a part of that."

Sergeant Lazzari also said his military experience helped him succeed on this deployment.

"This is my first deployment with a FEMA task force team," he said. "A lot of the members of the team are still in the military and prior military. Our deployment there was a lot like our military deployments. It's a bare base operation -- we had the Alaskan shelter, the portable showers, the tents. The way we operated and the command structure was very military-like. My military experience really helped me excel."



Congressman Tonko visits Stratton

Congressman Paul Tonko, District 21, came to visit Stratton Air National Guard Base on April 6. While here, Col. Timothy LaBarge, vice commander, showed him the 109th LC-130. The congressman also got a chance to speak with Airmen here. (Photos by Master Sgt. Christine Wood)

Helstowski, from page 5 was something brand new, and it really balances out well,” he said. “The things you learn here, I brought over to the fire department. Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence In All You Do – you bring that work ethic to the fire department. As a lieutenant over there, I try to instill those values in the new recruits, and get them motivated.”

“I think it goes both ways,” said Senior Master Sgt. Kurt Garrison, loadmaster superintendent. “Being in the military helped him be a better firefighter, and what he’s learned being a firefighter has brought more to the military.” Sergeant Garrison said that Sergeant Helstowski is a hard worker and takes pride in his jobs. “As a flight leader, he is always on top of all the issues of his flight and always keeps good communication among himself, the flight members and his chain of command. He’s able to do this all while maintaining his extremely busy civilian career.”

At the fire station, you never know what to expect; at the base, you do, Sergeant Helstowski said. “Some calls, like a bad car accident or a pediatric death, never really leave you. Coming to the base is almost like an escape.” Many are calling Sergeant Helstowski a hero after seeing his picture in the local newspaper, but he doesn’t see it that way.

“That’s my job. It’s like here. You train, you train, you train, and you hope you never get put in that situation. But when you are, you’re ready to go,” he said. “Until you’re put in that situation ... It’s surreal when it happens. It feels good to bring those kids out and give them that second chance.”

“We are all really proud of Anthony and what he did,” Sergeant Garrison said. “This is the ultimate epitome of the Citizen-Airman, a guardsman.”

Chaplain’s Corner

Catholic Mass is held the Sunday of each UTA in the AME auditorium, Bldg. 34, at 7:45 a.m. **Protestant service** is also at 7:45 a.m. in the Wing’s conference room, Bldg. 1. All are invited to either service.

Please pray for the Haitian Earthquake victims, and if you can, please provide financial support by sending donations to the relief agency of your choice.

You’re invited to the **coffee and donut fellowship** right after the Protestant service and Catholic Mass starting at 8:25 a.m. in the Wing’s conference room, Bldg. 1.

Please donate your soda and water bottles to the chaplains. We use the funds to pay for our coffee and donut fellowship. A collection recycle box is located in Bldg 1, under the stairway to the second floor, and another one in the safety office. See one of the NCOs there.

Become a **Catholic service volunteer**. We could use readers, singers, musicians, Eucharistic ministers and door greeters. E-mail Master Sgt. Ottavio LoPiccolo or Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Henderson to be added to our volunteers list. Training will be provided.

Are you looking for a better and more hopeful direction? Check out this site; www.directionforourtimes.com – See what heaven has to say to us at this time.

Free instructional materials for Eucharistic/Extra ordinary ministers can be accessed by logging on the Saint Anthony’s Parish Web site at www.stanthonyschurch.net. Click on “training” to find helpful presentations and documents for educational purposes.

Chaplains Self Help Library. You may check out books for several UTAs. Our materials cover topics like deployments, stress, suicide prevention, depression, family/marriage relationship improvement, children discipline, faith, spiritual wellness, and others. Come anytime during the UTA or after, our office is always open, and sign out the book you want in the Library Binder. Pocket guides are free (no need to sign them out) in the cabinet next to the JAG office.

Would you like to visit a veteran? If you’re interested in this ministry and becoming a veteran’s friend at the VA Medical Center in Albany, call their volunteer office at 626-5508 and ask for Stephanie Bonenfant. You can also e-mail her at Stephanie.bonenfant@med.va.gov

Volunteer Opportunities

Glendale Nursing Home: Currently there are about 30 veterans, men and women, who reside at Glendale. Having a military member stop by, even for a few minutes to chat with them, could be the highlight of their day. Glendale is in need of volunteers who can “transport” veterans from their rooms to other parts of the building to attend various events, such as church services, bingo or guest speakers. To volunteer, contact Chief Master Sgt. Rodney Begin at 344-2303.

Scotia Memorial Day Parade: Volunteers are needed to march in the Scotia Memorial Day Parade on Wednesday, May 26. A bus is scheduled to pick up volunteers from the base at 5 p.m. and bring them to Scotia. Upon arrival, a formation will be set, and the march in the parade will begin promptly at 6:15 p.m. ABUs, blues, and flight suits are authorized attire. If interested in this opportunity, please feel free to meet outside the operations’ building on that date and time, for bus boarding. A RUTA is authorized for guardsmen/technicians.

Club in Rotterdam is celebrating May as Military Appreciation Month. As part of the company’s “Operation Gratitude,” the military support campaign will be hosting a letter-writing campaign on Saturday, May 15 at the local Rotterdam club. The organizers are seeking volunteers who would be willing to give their time to work a table that will be set up to help folks write and/or collect hand written letters that will be sent to troops in theatre. The letters will be sent with care packages that have been put together by other local groups for military members. The station will set up at 9 a.m. that day and is expected to be open until the later afternoon, sometime around 4 p.m. You don’t have to stay the whole time, but instead, are encouraged to give any time that you can to support this. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Maj. Rob Donaldson at 344-2103.

Yates Mentoring Program: The Yates Art-In-Education Magnet school is a local school in Schenectady that benefits from the time and efforts that 109th members give to the young people during their lunch hours. The time you spend with the kids

is invaluable and each of the students truly values your efforts. Some kids will talk to you for hours telling you about their favorite lunch, and others will talk to you about how they are the best at arm wrestling. The important thing is that they have an adult that actually listens to them. You are an example. Come be a mentor today. If you’d like to volunteer, contact Maj. Rob Donaldson at 344-2103.

Jerry Burrell Park: The base is seeking members who would like to volunteer their time revitalizing Jerry Burrell Park, a playground for local youth in Schenectady. Organizers are asking the 109th AW for 10 volunteers who would like to participate in the rebuild on Saturday, May 22. They are asking volunteers to arrive by 8 a.m., and it’s expected that the project build will last until 8 p.m. Volunteers can assist the organizers by helping with the actual construction of the playground equipment, by planting trees, flowers, and shrubs, or by working in the food tents that will supply the volunteers with meals throughout the day. If you are interested, please contact Maj. Rob Donaldson at 344-2108.

Col. Anthony P. German has been selected for promotion and will be moving to Headquarters, New York Air National Guard in Latham. (Photo by Senior Airman Ben German)

Looking back, moving forward

Colonel German prepares to leave 109th
after four years as wing commander

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Public Affairs

Col. Anthony P. German never imagined he would be commander of an air wing. When he first joined the military, he knew two things – that he wanted to serve and that he wanted to fly. It wasn't until he was on his first active duty tour that he had even heard about the Air National Guard.

"As I came to the end of my time at Pope Air Force Base (N.C.), I applied to 12 different Guard units and was selected by 10," he said. "The two that I wanted most – Wilmington, Del., and Schenectady – I didn't hear anything from."

So Colonel German sent out a letter asking if he qualified. Soon after, Col. Brian Gomula got a hold of him and asked if he was still interested. He started shortly after.

"Looking back I realize that even when I was on active duty, I was a guardsman at heart," he said. "So I felt really at home. Here, it's about getting the mission done, and that's what I've always liked about it."

During his time here, Colonel German saw a lot of changes at the wing.

"When I first got here in 1989, we were just doing the Greenland (mission); we had just started going to Antarctica," he said. "There was a little bit of rumblings about maybe taking over the (Antarctica) mission full time in the early 90s, but I think that entire transition that took place was just a tremendous thing for any unit to go through. To see how well we've done in that transition from the Navy to the Air National Guard has been outstanding."

Colonel German emphasizes that without the people we have here, we wouldn't be able to carry out the mission.

"They're high caliber people -- all who want to do great things," he said. "You just have to let them go and they'll do it. They really don't need much motivation -- they're just motivated. I mean, who wants to go outside and work in 50 below zero weather. It's something that you have to want to do, and they want to do it."

Even with all he had experienced in the wing, Colonel German still never thought about being commander.

"I just wanted to do the best that I could in the job that I was given, and whatever happened from there was good. The advice I give other folks is 'Don't worry about where it is you're trying

See GERMAN, Page 13

Hail & Farewell

Col Anthony P. German

Location:
Lighthouse Restaurant
Freeman's Bridge Rd
Scotia, NY 12302

11 Jun 10 at 1730-2000
RSVP 4 Jun 10

For Tickets Contact:

MSgt Power- Bldg 1
TSgt Hanus- AMXS
TSgt Smith- Comm
SSgt Varney- Supply
SrA Miller- OP's



Heavy Hors D'oeuvres
Drinks, dessert, coffee
\$25.00/person

Feature

German, from page 11 to go, just worry about what it is that you're doing. And it'll make your life go a lot easier."

"When I did become the wing commander, I looked at it as (any other) job," he said. "I came to work like everybody else did, and I just had a different piece that I needed to do. The one thing that I wanted to make sure of was for our unit to have a long-term viability -- not five years from now, not 10 years from now, but 25 to 40 years from now."

He knew in doing that, he would have to step up the 109th's mission.

"When I first came here, one of the things that I saw that was lacking a bit was a focus on what our real mission is here," he said. "We do Antarctica and we do Greenland, but the real reason that we wear this uniform is to serve our nation, and currently our nation's been at war since the early 1990s. The support group on base was doing a great job supporting the war, but I knew that we had significant opportunities on the operations and maintenance side. So, one of the things that I knew that we needed to change was the way that we looked upon our wartime tasking. Within 18 months, we sent airplanes, aircrews and maintainers to Afghanistan."

"Colonel German's managerial and leadership traits allowed him to guide our wing through the evolution from a Guard base trying to fit into the occasional active duty support role to an Expeditionary Air Guard Wing postured for the 21st century," said Chief Master Sgt. Charlie Lucia, former 109th command chief. "The 109th has moved from a wing where more definitive sections such as Mission Support Group, Wing, Civil Engineering, Security Forces and Aeromedical Squadron supported contingency operations, and Operations/Maintenance supported Polar operations. Today we better represent an expeditionary wing fully able to be engaged in any role required by the governor or president. This evolution was necessary, it was not easy, and I believe its success lies with Colonel German's ability to convey that vision to our membership."

"We were a great unit before going to Afghanistan, and we're an even better unit since we've gone," Colonel German said. "The rest of the Air National Guard has been able to see our work ethic and they understand what a great unit we are. It's easy for us to say how great we are, but it's a lot better when someone else tells you how great you are. And that's where we sit today. So hopefully, mission accomplished."

Colonel German prides himself on being a "people person," and makes it a point to get out there and interact with as many Airmen as he can.

"As a newly enlisted member of the 109th, my first interaction with Colonel German was when he took the time out of his busy schedule during a UTA to address concerns from both the senior and junior enlisted," said Airman 1st Class Anthony Amico. "Seeing first-hand the 109th Wing Commander taking open questions and answering honestly helped me realize not only that he truly cared about all of the personnel on base, but also that he saw Stratton Air National Guard Base as the best unit in the ANG."

"Colonel German has been exceptionally supportive of the enlisted force throughout his career," said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Cristiano, 109th command chief. "As a young officer, he made

sure the enlisted flyers on his crew were always taken care of. This concern for the enlisted continued as the 109th's commander. Making sure the enlisted force had the equipment and support of the Wing staff has been a keystone of his leadership. In addition to providing us the tools we needed to perform the mission, he truly cares about the health and well-being of his enlisted force. This is a genuine concern. He did this not because it was required or expected it was just, 'The right thing to do.' He leaves the 109th a better wing because of his vision, leadership and integrity."

"I really didn't know Colonel German when I was asked to join his team as a member of the Command Staff in 2006," said Senior Master Sgt. Amy Giaquinto, knowledge operations manager. "I immediately recognized his leadership skills and admired the changes he was making across the wing. I am glad I had the opportunity to get to know him and feel fortunate to have worked with him. I have a great amount of respect for him as a leader, as a mentor, and as a family man."

While many got along well with Colonel German, there was one person who enjoyed fighting the issues with the commander -- but Col. Timothy LaBarge said it was part of his job as the vice commander.

"One of the things that I told Colonel German I would do as his vice commander is present the contrarian point of view to ensure that we both thoroughly understood all sides of an issue," Colonel LaBarge said. "This led to some spirited discussions behind closed doors as we vetted the issue. I knew that I was gaining traction or that we were coming to an understanding of the issue when Colonel German would say 'Would you listen to yourself?' or, my personal favorite, 'You are about two seconds away from getting fired.' Then I knew that we had sufficiently examined the issue! As far as I know, he never actually fired me."

Between the 109th AW's unique mission and its dedicated people, Colonel German said it will be hard for him to leave the unit.

"This is the best job in the Air Force and the best job in the Air National Guard. Being the commander here at Schenectady is by far the best thing I can do. As I leave, it will be hard for me to say goodbye, because I really enjoy the people. We have the greatest people in the world working here. We have the greatest mission. We don't realize how lucky we are to be able to do the things that we do -- and to give that up and leave will be hard. I'm sure I'll have new challenges, I'm not sure I'll ever have a better job. ... It's very bittersweet. But, we all need change, and this is just one of those changes in life that we roll with and we adapt to. The wing will be in great hands."

Col. Timothy LaBarge, current wing vice commander, has been selected as the next 109th Airlift Wing commander. He will take command of the wing during a change of command ceremony scheduled for June 12 at 2 p.m. in front of Hangar 1.

Col. Anthony P. German will move to Headquarters, New York Air National Guard in Latham.

Airmen catch van to work, save fuel, money

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Public Affairs

Almost 10 people are currently taking advantage of the vanpooling service offered to Airmen on base, helping them save money in gas and mileage on personal vehicles, as well as helping the environment.

Staff Sgt. Ben Ogburn heads up the vanpool, provided by VPSI, which travels up and down the Northway. "I'm at Exit 17 North," he said. "I've been driving for more than 10 years about 90 miles a day. I figured out that it was costing about \$18 a day to drive to work." Some of the riders in his vanpool live in Glens Falls, Greenfield Center

and Saratoga. According to vanpools.com, the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority said vanpooling is a "strategy that has the potential of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases and the consumption of petroleum products by reducing vehicle miles traveled in New York State, without adversely affecting the state's economy and way of life. As an example, a 15-passenger VPSI vanpool reduces 335,500 miles traveled and 136 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent in one year."

New York State provides \$500 toward the program, and

the Defense Department offers up to \$230 a person, depending on the number of people in the vanpool, Sergeant Ogburn said.

Sergeant Ogburn got the first van up and running, which was the hardest part, and said another one is in the works for the Amsterdam area.

With deployments to Greenland, Antarctica and Southwest Asia, along with people taking vacation, Sergeant Ogburn said it's tough to keep it at nine people. Even he'll be deploying soon, and his alternate will have take over his responsibilities.

"It's tough, because if you're gone for more than 30 days, then that voucher can't get turned in for funds," he said.

Sergeant Ogburn is hoping to get the word out to base members.

"As people start seeing the van on base, it raises questions, which is good," he said. "I'm hoping as time goes on, the word will spread. Especially with deployments coming up, we need more people on the van so we don't end up losing the program."

"I wish this was going on 10 years ago," Sergeant Ogburn said. "I can only imagine all the thousands of dollars I spent on gas and preventative repairs."

If you're interested in participating in the vanpool program, either with the current vans or setting up a new group, contact Sergeant Ogburn at benjamin.ogburn@ang.af.mil.



Courtesy photo

Help USA

Senior Airman Nichole Pease (left) attended the 25th anniversary dinner of Help USA on March 2. Airman Pease is the treasurer of the Veterans Club at her school, John Jay College of Criminal Justice CUNY, and was invited to the dinner by her school's president. Help USA is an organization that helps the homeless, which includes many veterans. Also in attendance was Army Gen. David H. Petreus, U.S. Central Command commander (pictured). Airman Pease is assigned to the 109th Civil Engineer Squadron.



(Photo by Amn Deanna DeLaura)

Medical Exercise

Lt. Col. Elaine Jacksland, 139th Airlift Squadron, prepares a simulated casualty for transport during Exercise Golden Eagle II at Stewart Air National Guard Base on May 1, -a training exercise designed to test the ability of local medical providers to participate in the National Disaster Medical System in which patients are moved from areas affected by a disaster to other locations. More than 200 participants from local medical agencies and facilities ranging from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the aeromedical personnel of the 105th and 109th Airlift Wings. The exercise tests casualty reporting mechanisms, communications between state, local, and federal participants and exercise the Federal Coordinating Centers.

AF officials announce uniform policy changes

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – Air Force officials announced April 12 uniform policy updates resulting from recent Air Force Uniform Board decisions.

The following policy modifications are effective immediately unless otherwise stated and will be incorporated into Air Force Instruction 36-2903, Air Force Uniform Dress and Appearance.

The tucking of trousers on utility uniforms into boots will remain optional. This reverses a mandatory tuck-in requirement previously announced by the 98th Air Force Virtual Uniform Board.

When tucked in or bloused, the trouser must be even and draped loosely over the top of the combat boot to present a bloused appearance.

The green fleece watch cap is approved for wear with the all-purpose environmental clothing system, improved rain suit, cold weather parka, sage green fleece and the physical training uniform.

Air Force officials encourage all Airmen to affix name, rank and service designator tapes instead of waiting for the Oct. 1 mandatory wear date.

However, officers wanting to wear a watch cap with the sage green fleece must now have their name, rank and service designator tapes affixed to the fleece effective immediately.

Other authorized cold weather items remain unchanged. They include the black or sage green leather, suede or knit gloves; black scarves that are tucked in; and black earmuffs.

VA cutting insurance premiums for families

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced April 29 here that military personnel insuring their families under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program will have reduced out-of-pocket expenses beginning July 1.

"VA (officials hope) these reductions will allow more military personnel to obtain affordable life insurance coverage for their spouses, particularly in these difficult economic times," Secretary Shinseki said. "Without insurance protection, life after the loss of a spouse can be not only challenging emotionally, but can place a severe financial strain on a family."

Based on the coverage of servicemembers, spouses may be insured for up to \$100,000. Military personnel pay age-based premiums for spousal coverage; the older the spouse, the higher the premium rate.

for all age groups by an average of 8 percent.

The new rates are based on revised estimates for the cost of the program. This is the third time that premiums have been reduced since the FSGLI program began in November 2001. Spousal premiums were previously reduced for all age groups in 2003 and 2006.

FSGLI coverage provides life insurance protection to military members for their spouses and children. Children are automatically insured for \$10,000, with no premiums charged.

Family SGLI monthly premium rates will be reduced



Family Day

August 15, 2010

Stratton Air National Guard Base

12-5pm

Car/Motorcycle Show



Food & drinks



Live Band

Static Displays



State Police

DARE



Bouncy Bounce

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Family Programs

Family Readiness page now available on 109AW Web site

The Airman and Family Readiness Program now has a Web page on the 109th Airlift Wing public Web site. On it, Airmen and family members will find useful information on youth programs, readiness and resources for assistance.

Along with photos and contact information, the site includes links to Web sites helpful to both Airmen and their families, such as Military One Source, Joint Services Support, Military Spouse Career Advancement and Military Family Life Consultants,

among many others.

We are currently working to get the calendar of events up and running as a tool to keep everyone informed of what events the Family Readiness office has planned, to include Yellow Ribbon events, youth events and programs such as Strong Bonds.

The Web page continues to grow, and we hope it will be a tool everyone can use to stay up to date and informed on the many programs available to you and your families.

WWW.109AW.ANG.AF.MIL/RESOURCES/FAMILYREADINESS

Galaxy Camp

This summer we will once again be hosting the 109th Airlift Wing GALAXY Youth Program from 19-23 July 2010. The 109th is pleased to offer this summer enrichment program to children of 109th members and we plan to have an outstanding time! We have a stimulating program for 8 – 12 year old youngsters emphasizing hands-on science, developing goal setting skills, and team building. Students will tour the base and take part in demonstrations given by C-130 Pilots and Loadmasters, Aeromedical Evacuation crewmembers, Life Support Personnel, and many more! We will also be doing some off base field trips. If your child is 13 or older and would still like to participate, they can apply to be a junior counselor.

Forms are available on the Family Readiness Web site and must be turned in by June 19.

In the Community



Bike donation

Tech. Sgt. Shane Warner of the 109th Force Support Squadron drops off two brand-new bicycles April 16 donated by the 109th All-ranks Club and the 109th Chief's Council to Yates Arts in Education Magnet School in Schenectady. The bikes are part of the 109 AW's Mentoring Program effort to support Principal Valarie Scott's Positive Behavior In School (PBIS) program. The 109 AW will donate six new bikes, total this year. Other units that donated bikes were the 109 FSS, Aircrew Flight Equipment, the Wing Command Suite and Chief Master Sgt. Mike Cristiano.

Courtesy photo

Lunch program under way, volunteers needed

By Retired Lt. Col. Tom Noel
Alumni Representative

The 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association this year once again served a very successful traditional St. Patrick’s Day dinner on base at the All Ranks Club on March 18. Food for about 100 people was prepared and served to everyone’s satisfaction. Thanks to all volunteers who assisted Bill Pickney in putting this outstanding dinner on.

The Summer Wednesday Lunch Program began Wednesday April 28 on base at the All Ranks Club. We are always looking for volunteers to help with this program. Volunteers are needed between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on scheduled Wednesday lunch days. The program runs through August.

New Military Courtesy Room at Albany County International Airport. I’ve recently been informed that there is a new military courtesy room at Albany Airport that our members may use while in transit through the airport. I thought this may be something you all would be interested in.

I have been a member of the Burnt Hills/ Ballston Lake American Legion Post 1817 for the past three years. They are looking for additional members.

If anybody is interested in joining please contact the Commander Don Grant at 17 Huckleberry Lane, Ballston Lake, NY 12019-1529, or call him at 877-8613. The American Legion Post 1817 meetings are held upstairs over Carney’s Restaurant, Ballston Lake the second Wednesday of each month starting at 7:30 p.m. normally lasting on later than an hour. I hope some of you are interested in joining this great American Legion Post; three 109th Airlift Wing veterans are already members.

Alumni Election of Officers was held at January’s monthly Alumni meeting. The officers for 2010 are as follows:

- President – Bill Liberis
- Vice President -- Gene DeLong
- Secretary -- Bob Guzior
- Treasurer -- Ken Bliss
- Board of Director Members – Tom Noel and Dick Weakley
- Col. Tony German, 109th Airlift Wing

Commander, was notified by The Adjutant General that he has been promoted and will be moving on to Headquarters NYANG. Col. Timothy LaBarge has been selected to take over as the news commander, and a change of command is scheduled for June. Colonel German said, “It is with mixed feelings that I will leave the best wing and the best job in the Air National Guard. It has been an unbelievable experience being the Commander of such a motivated unit that succeeds at everything it does. Each day I am amazed at the quality of Airmen we have at the base, each doing their best at their job to ensure we get our mission done. Even in a tough weather year in Antarctica, I have received numerous accolades from the DVs who transit Antarctica.

“They are astounded by the work you do and the positive attitude you maintain working in such austere conditions. Each of them marvels at the individual professionalism displayed by all they come in contact with and the immense unit price we display. This is a credit to each of you and the seriousness with which you attach your work. I am truly humbled by all of the things you do each and every day for our great nation. I thank each of you for the privilege it has been to serve as your Commander and I look forward to working with you in my new capacity.

“RAVEN MOUNTAINS” located down in Antarctica have many peaks that were named for members of the 109th Airlift Wing. “Saburro Peak”, “Pritchard Peak”, “Cassatelli Peak”, “Stahl Peak”, “Lucia Peak”, “Beale Peak”, “Doll Peak”, “Adam’s Crest”. It was interesting

to get this information from Col. Richard Saburro, past Commander of Operation Deep Freeze for the 109th Airlift Wing.

The members of the 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association would like to send their condolences and prayers to the families of the following individuals who have passed away over the past few months.

Lt Col Matt LeClair’s father, Walter J. LeClair, 73 died Jan. 7 at the Indian River Medical Center in Vero Beach, Fla.

Tim Guiry’s uncle, William A. (Champ) Guiry, 72, of Loudonville, passed away Feb. 9 at Albany Memorial Hospital.

Master Sgt. Ernest (Ernie) V. Ninneman Sr., of Martin Road, Fonda, died Feb. 18 at St. Mary’s Hospital in Amsterdam. He was a member of the 109th Airlift Wing for many years.

Lt. Col.’s Ronald and Jodi Ankabrandt’s mother Geraldine (Geri) Ambrozak died Feb. 5.

Master Sgt. Paul Hines, 61, who retired from the 109th Airlift Wing Aerial Port not long ago died March 14.

Master Sgt. Marshall J. Knapik, 66, died April 15 at St. Mary’s Hospital. Upon his honorable discharge from the U.S. Air Force in 1967, Marshall enlisted in the 109th Airlift Wing in 1967 and retired in 1997.

Our thoughts and prayers are with these individuals and their families; they will be missed greatly.

Until the next quarterly issue of this Skibird Magazine publication, hope you all had a wonderful and safe Winter. Stay Happy, Healthy, Safe, Prosperous and “Think Summer.”

Deadline Notice

Articles for the next issue of the *Skibird* are due by July 16



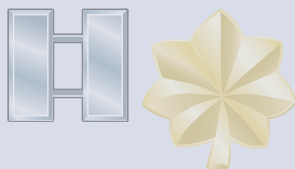
Officer Promotions

Lieutenant Colonel
Jody Ankabrandt – AW
Michael Kelly - AS

Captain
Sean Wettig - AW

First Lieutenant
Dominick Tatangelo – AS
James Vendetti - JFHQ

Second Lieutenant
Joshua German - AW
James Vanwormer – CES



Chief Master Sergeant
Michael Burdo – MXM
Mark Mann – LRS

Senior Master Sergeant
Douglas Coons – AES
John Dowd - AW
Kevin Hart - LRS
Michael Messineo - AS
Joseph Sinatra - AMXS
Jeffrey Trottier - OG

Master Sergeant
Jason Bach – AW
Michael Cousineau – AS
Mark Demichele – SFS
Greg Mihalko – CF
Henry Panten – AES
Collin Rost – SFS

Enlisted Promotions

Technical Sergeant
Thomas Evanoika – SFS
James Gorman – AES
Charles Hatch – SFS
John Hayden, Jr. – AES
Michael Lewis – MDG
Allen Moon – SFS
Jared Nardi – MXM
Chelsea Rillo – AES

Staff Sergeant
Brett Gatta – AS
Samuel Green – AMXS
Jason Grupp – STUF
James Guarneri – FSS
Dawn Herbert – FSS
Carlton Kuhlmeier – SFS
Shane Long – LRS
Zacharay McCreary – STUF
Anna Newton – MXM
Adam Pieniazek – CF
Walter Sass – MXM
Matthew Smith – MXM

Senior Airman
Samantha Bonk – FSS
Ashley Byerwalters – SFS
Vanessa Clark – SFS
Kimberly Decker – LRS
Anthony Derocco – MXM
Sara Eldred – LRS
Benjamin German – AW
Sarah Ledger – FSS
Haleigh Muskopf – AES
Kevin Partlow – AES
Michael Rivers – AMXS
Kristine Roberts – AES
Amy Scott – FSS
Jeremy Trentini – AMXS

Awards

Meritorious Service Medal
Lt Col Sharon Stepp – AW
Maj Judith Maloney – LRS
MSgt David Trasky – CF
MSgt Kenneth Voelker - MXM

Air Force Commendation Medal
Maj Allen Styno – AES
MSgt Keith Boehlke – CF
MSgt Kim McDonnell – CF
MSgt Jonathan Michael – AS
TSgt John Hayden Jr. – AES
TSgt Michael Lewis – MDG
TSgt Pedro Negron – CF
TSgt Kenneth Scholl – CF

Air Force Achievement Medal
MSgt Norman Martin – MXM
MSgt Donna Torres – JFHQ
MSgt Greg Mihalko – CF
TSgt Jodi Habbinger – CF
SSgt Eric Rising – CF



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Airmen of the Year

Staff Sgt. Michael Lee, Master Sgt. Charles Powers and Chief Master Sgt. Denny Richardson are honored at the annual 2009 Wing Airman of the Year luncheon. Sergeant Lee, of the Command Post, is the Airman of the Year; Sergeant Powers, of the Civil Engineer Squadron, is the NCO of the Year; and Chief Richardson is the Honor Guard Manager of the Year.

109th Airlift Wing
1 Air National Guard Road
Scotia, NY 12302-9752

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Photo illustration by Staff Sgt. Brett Bouchard

Mission statement

Provide the most professional theatre combat forces, ready to rapidly deploy statewide, worldwide and pole to pole.

Vision statement

A united military organization of empowered individuals building on our proud tradition of serving country, state and community; leaning forward, ready to meet combat and peacetime challenges throughout the world.